

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

WO002 / V6.0

1. Equal opportunities statement

- 1.1 Diversity and inclusion are critical to our mission. We need a truly diverse workforce that reflects the society we serve. This includes diversity in every sense of the word: those with different backgrounds, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, ways of thinking and those with disabilities or neurodiverse conditions. We therefore welcome and encourage applications from everyone, including those from groups that are under-represented in our workforce.
- 1.2 The company is committed to promoting equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion with our employer clients, and specifically with the recruitment of Apprentices and learners.
- 1.3 We promote equal opportunity, by first ensuring we follow EEOC regulations and EEO laws that apply to each part of our company.
- 1.4 The business is an equal opportunity employer. Every employee, regardless of status, has personal responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- 1.5 We believe that our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy supports the Equality Act 2010 however additionally we advocate across our organisation that no one feels left out because of any protected characteristics, or other factors such as social background. Ultimately our inclusive working environment allows people to be themselves at work. We extend our policy to consider how our staff work together on a daily basis. The policy also applies equally to the behaviour of everyone in our organisation towards all stake holders, e.g. learners, Apprentices, employers, and colleagues in the workplace. All staff and especially those involved in recruitment and marketing should request training if they have any doubt about the application of our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policy.

- 1.6 All staff, consultants, contractors, and learners are expected to behave with integrity, tolerance, and compassion in their dealings with one another. We provide opportunities for all Apprentices and learners not only to explore their own cultures but also to understand how these align with British Values and how we can work together as a community for the greater good.

2. About this policy

- 2.1 This policy sets out our approach to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination at work, under the broader headings of equality, diversity, and inclusion. It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment and the following protected characteristics:
- (a) Gender
 - (b) Sexual orientation
 - (c) Marital or civil partner status
 - (d) Pregnancy or maternity
 - (e) Gender reassignment
 - (f) Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
 - (g) Religion or belief
 - (h) Disability
 - (i) Age
- 2.2 The HR and Learning & Development Director is responsible for this policy and any necessary training on equal opportunities.
- 2.3 The Company may, at its discretion, ask suitably experienced external consultants (e.g. our outsourced HR Advisors) to participate in all or part of this policy, including undertaking investigations, meetings, or hearings. Where a consultant acts as Chair in meetings/ hearings etc. that person may make outcome recommendations to The Childcare Company / Impact Futures but ultimately The Childcare Company / Impact Futures will make the decision on whether to accept the recommendation.

- 2.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.
- 2.5 The policy covers how we work with our employer clients and their Apprentices and learners. Specifically, to ensure Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles are applied to the recruitment and engagement of potential Apprentices and learners, training, and development opportunities to support all individuals to complete their programme and attain the highest grades and is non-discriminatory.
- 2.6 We will promote this policy through staff engagement activities, such as training session, meetings, induction, and newsletters. We will promote the policy with employers, Apprentices, and learners as part of our initial contracting and enrolment processes and through ongoing training and development.

3. **Discrimination**

- 3.1 You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers, or other work-related contacts), and on work-related trips or events including social events.
- 3.2 The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:
- (a) Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.
 - (b) Indirect discrimination: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
 - (c) Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose

or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Dignity at Work Policy (staff handbook schedule 7).

- (d) Victimization: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- (e) Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

4. Recruitment and selection

- 4.1 Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible.
- 4.2 Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. They should include a short policy statement on equal opportunities and a copy of this policy will be made available on request.
- 4.3 Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.
- 4.4 Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

5. **Disabilities**

- 5.1 If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

6. **Part-time and fixed-term work**

- 6.1 Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is justified.

7. **Roles and Responsibilities**

- 7.1 This policy applies to all team members, including agency staff, learners, employers, work placement providers, visitors, and contractors working on site and sub-contractors.

7.2 Board of Directors

- (a) It is the responsibility of the CEO and Board of Directors to ensure that The Childcare Company / Impact Futures meets its legislative responsibilities in respect of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and for receiving and responding to monitoring information. The Board sets an example in the promotion and engagement with this policy and principles of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). The HR and Learning & Development Director has ownership of this policy, which means taking a leading role in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policy and training, but doesn't take away the responsibilities of the Board, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), managers and all staff.

7.3 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Human Resources (HR)

- (a) The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Human Resources (HR) are responsible for ensuring that team members, Apprentices and learners are familiar with their roles and responsibilities and the content of this policy and understand their legal obligations. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is committed to providing support and equality and diversity training to promote a positive and inclusive culture for learning and for work. The Team is responsible for

monitoring the profile of Apprentices, learners and team member profiles by age, gender, race, and disability.

- (b) They are responsible for ensuring that the recruitment and selection policy does not discriminate in any way and that job advertisements are fully inclusive. This will include advertising through recognised minority group’s publications where appropriate. We ensure that recruitment and selection procedures are open, consistently applied, and free from bias, stereotyping, and discrimination. Additionally, we will endeavour to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to arrangements and premises to ensure both current and potential team members with a disability have equality of access. Additionally, if required, we will provide Apprentices and learners with additional learning support, by accessing funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and allocating protected time with a member of our learning support team.
- (c) The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is charged with bringing this policy to life and using a range of communication and training techniques to ensure that there is full engagement across the business.

7.4 Team Members and Learners

- (a) All team members, Apprentices and learners are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy, and for their own conduct. All team members should challenge discriminatory behaviour by learners, placement providers, outside contractors, and other team members. It is the duty of all team members and learners to avoid unfair discriminatory practices.
- (b) We are committed to the general health and wellbeing of our Apprentices, learners, and team members, and encourage them to develop positive relationships, to respect others and to celebrate diversity. Bullying or discrimination or any other form of discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated. Safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure that Apprentices and learners have a safe and secure environment.

- (c) We seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination or harassment according to the policies listed in this document.

7.5 Further details can be found in sections 9, 10 and 11.

8. What Employees Can Expect

8.1 Employees can expect to be treated fairly and equally with regards to all aspects of their employment; promotion, terms and conditions, salary, training and development and project work, based on the knowledge skills and experience and current job role.

8.2 Employees who are disabled or who become disabled in the course of their employment should inform their line manager and may also wish to advise us of any “reasonable adjustments” to their employment or working conditions which they consider to be necessary or which they consider would assist them in the performance of their duties. Careful consideration will be given to any proposals of this nature and, where reasonable and reasonably practicable such adjustments will be made.

9. Grievance, Disciplinary and Whistle Blowing

9.1 Any member of staff may use the Grievance Policy and Procedure or Dignity at Work Policy to complain about discriminatory conduct. If the matter relates to harassment or victimisation, whether it is directed at the member of staff themselves, then the grievance may be raised directly with their line manager. The business is committed to ensuring that staff feel able to raise such grievances and no individual will be victimised for raising such a grievance. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

9.2 Any employee who harasses any other employee on the grounds of race, sex, or disability will be subject to the business Disciplinary Procedure. In serious cases, such behaviour will be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and, as such, will result in summary dismissal in the absence of mitigating circumstances.

- 9.3 In the event of any harassment to or victimisation of, an individual or group, a nominated investigating manager will liaise with HR and investigate it as per the Grievance policy.
- 9.4 The Whistle Blowing Policy (schedule 10) protects whistle blowers that raise genuine issues and concerns through the right channels, including those relating to the Equality Act 2010 and the guiding principles of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).
- 9.5 You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

10. What Apprentices, Learners and Their Employers Can Expect

- 10.1 Marketing and Access to Learning
 - (a) Our publicity, Apprentice and learner recruitment procedures are designed to encourage applications from all sections of the community and from all levels of ability and will be available in a range of formats.
 - (b) We will ensure that admission procedures are user friendly and avoid unnecessary barriers to access for intending learners.
 - (c) We will continue to identify and respond to learning needs within the communities in which we work and will encourage widening participation from underrepresented, disadvantaged or excluded groups.
 - (d) We make clear our expectations and commitments to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in our marketing materials and events, during the Apprentice and learner on-boarding process and again during induction. This is further embedded throughout our Apprenticeship and other learning programme delivery.
 - (e) Equal opportunities data will be collected, analysed, and used to inform the planning and decision-making process of our marketing.

10.2 The Learning Environment

- (a) We are committed to the development of learning environments that are welcoming and safe for all learners and Apprentices.
- (b) We will continue to develop its facilities to improve access for learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities.
- (c) Through a multi-agency approach, we meet the targets surrounding the 'Every Child Matters Strategy':
 - (i) Be healthy.
 - (ii) Stay safe.
 - (iii) Enjoy and achieve.
 - (iv) Make a positive contribution.
 - (v) Achieve economic well-being.

10.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- (a) Staff ensure that teaching and learning materials and delivery methods are free from bias, avoid stereotyping and discrimination.
- (b) Staff encourage learners to explore equality and diversity issues.
- (c) Awareness raising of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), with real examples forms part of the part of the general induction and is embedded as a golden thread within our curriculum.
- (d) We ensure that learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate additional support to meet individual learner needs to reach their potential.
- (e) Provide a range of support services and facilities which will enable learners with physical, social, and cultural needs to participate fully in studies, including:
 - (i) tutorial support
 - (ii) additional support with learning
 - (iii) financial and welfare advice
 - (iv) personal counselling

- (v) social/recreational/catering facilities
 - (vi) multi faith rooms
 - (f) Staff will regularly review course design and delivery to meet the various learning needs to improve access to learning.
 - (g) We ensure that the views and perceptions of learners are included in the process of curriculum review and self-assessment and curriculum development.
- 10.4 Resources are available in formats appropriate to the needs of individual learners, including the use of specialist equipment where appropriate.

11. Complaints

- 11.1 All external complaints relating to any aspect of equality will be dealt with as a priority in line with our published Complaints Policy.

12. Monitoring

- 12.1 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is subject to regular review. The policy and the implementation arrangements which underpin it will be formally reviewed on an annual basis. This review will consider the views of team members, learners, and relevant legislation.
- 12.2 We monitor the profile of our Apprentices, learners and employees by age, gender, disability, and ethnicity. Monitoring for Apprentices and learners is undertaken by the Inclusion Manager, for employees, by the HR department. Data collected for monitoring purposes will be reported annually to the Board of Directors. The presentation of such information shall observe our legal and contractual responsibilities in respect of individual confidentiality particularly in regard of sensitive data and will not unnecessarily identify individuals.
- 12.3 Learner enrolment, retention, and achievement, learner survey and complaints are annually monitored by ethnic group, gender, age and disability and the findings are used to inform the Self-Assessment Reviews. Learners' views are identified by means of satisfaction surveys, learner representatives and the equality and diversity groups.

- 12.4 Complaints made to The Childcare Company / Impact Futures on grounds associated with equality and diversity are considered a high priority and actioned as quickly as possible and analysed to establish any trends.
- 12.5 The following systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the equality and diversity impact:
- (a) Annual Self-Assessment Report (SAR).
 - (b) Learner survey and focus groups.
 - (c) Equality analysis.
- 12.6 We will monitor our staff recruitment to identify any unexpected trends and take action to rectify.

13. **Implementing Anti-discriminatory Practice**

- 13.1 The business will implement this policy by:
- (a) Making and publicising our clear statement on equal opportunities.
 - (b) Including this policy in the staff handbook.
 - (c) Ensuring that it is a condition of employment of the business and membership of the management team and that those concerned understand, agree with and are willing to implement this policy.
 - (d) Monitoring our programmes, events, publicity, and services to ensure that they too lead to the elimination of discrimination.
 - (e) Adopting employment policies which aim to ensure that no applicant or employee of the business is discriminated against on any grounds.
 - (f) Adopting policies which positively encourage participation in the activities at the business by those who are particularly subject to wider disadvantages within society.
 - (g) Staff will be encouraged to develop a greater understanding of significant issues relating to the nine protected characteristics and the impact that discrimination can have on people's lives.
 - (h) Staff will be made aware of current legislation and guidance and take part in training.

- (i) Delivery staff are expected to gain sufficient current knowledge to be able to deliver Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) training sessions with their Apprentices and learners.
- 13.2 Staff must receive refresher training annually and such training must be recorded on their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) logs.

14. **Linked Policies and Procedures**

- 14.1 Dignity at Work Policy (schedule 7)
- 14.2 Grievance Policy and Procedure (schedule 14)
- 14.3 Disciplinary Procedure (schedule 12)
- 14.4 Whistle Blowing Policy (schedule 10)
- 14.5 WO004 Complaints Policy
- 14.6 Flexible Working Policy (schedule 26)
- 14.7 QU003 Learning & Development - Continued Professional Development Polcy

15. Document control

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Date

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